

**United States**  
**Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Land Management**

*Miles City Field Office*

**Spring Creek**  
**Amend Existing Coal**  
**Exploration Licenses**

Determination of NEPA Adequacy  
DOI-BLM-MT-C020-2013-0165-DNA

*For Further Information Please Contact:*

Bureau of Land Management  
Miles City Field Office  
111 Garryowen Road  
Miles City, Montana 59301  
406-233-2800

BLM



DATE DUE: July 7, 2013

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Page 2 of 6

The proposed action analyzed in this document is within the geographic area covered by the Powder River Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved March 15, 1985, and is in conformance with this plan. The Powder River RMP Record of Decision of 1985, states on page 2:

Future development will come from current leases covering 39,391 acres (3.43 billion tons), those unleased areas determined acceptable for further consideration in the 1979 MFP Update and 1982 Amendment covering 91,700 acres (7.83 billion tons) and unleased areas determined acceptable for further consideration from new planning covering 869,600 acres (54.37 billion tons).

The RMP anticipated that further development of coal within the Powder River Basin would occur and therefore this action meets the intent of the RMP.

### **C. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document(s) and other related documents that cover the proposed action.**

List by name and date all applicable NEPA documents that cover the proposed action.

1. [MT-020-2006-058](#) Environmental Assessment approved October 27, 2005 for exploration license MTM 94825. This license was for exploration drilling in T. 8 S., R. 39 E., P.M.M.
2. [MT-020-2006-419](#) Environmental Assessment approved September 8, 2006 for amending exploration license MTM 94825. This license was for exploration drilling in T. 8 S., R. 39 E., P.M.M.

List by name and date other documentation relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation and monitoring report).

Cultural Report MT-020-13-236

### **D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria**

**1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?** The existing analyses are adequate with regard to the proposed action. The referenced EAs analyzed impacts related to exploration drilling in the same geographic area. No significant new information or circumstances related to the proposed action have developed since completion of the referenced EAs.

**2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?** Yes the alternatives in the EA's analyzed exploration drilling within T. 8 S., R. 39 E., on lands directly adjacent to the proposed new drill holes. This analysis addressed current environmental concerns, interests and resource values.

**3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, and updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstance would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?**

No significant new information or circumstances related to the proposed action have developed since completion of the referenced EA.

**4. Are the direct, indirect and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?** Yes, the actions proposed would have the same direct and indirect impacts as those analyzed and addressed in the referenced EAs as exploration drilling would still occur within T. 8 S., R. 39 E., and the effects of this mining will be the same in context and intensity as the currently authorized exploration drilling.

**5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?** Yes, the public had the opportunity to review the referenced EAs. In addition, the RMP/FEIS had public and interagency involvement and review while being prepared.

**E. Interdisciplinary Analysis:** Identify those team members conducting or participating in the preparation of this worksheet.

REVIEWERS	TITLE	ASSIGNMENT	DATE/INITIALS
Bobby Baker	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife	7/8/13, BJB
Doug Melton	Archaeologist	Cultural Report	07/08/13 DM Cultural Report MT-20-13-236
Nate Arave	Solid Minerals Geologist	Geology	NLA 6/10/13
Dave Breisch	Assistant Field Manager	Review	DJB 7/24/13

  
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**Environmental Coordinator**

7/25/2013

**Date**

**F. Mitigation Measures:** List any applicable mitigation measures that were identified, analyzed, and approved in relevant LUPs and existing NEPA document(s). List the specific mitigation measures or identify an attachment that includes those specific mitigation measures. Document how these applicable mitigation measures must be incorporated and implemented.


1. Crucial Winger Range for Wildlife: Exploration activities as described above shall not be conducted from December 1 to March 31 for the protection of mule deer, pronghorn, and sage grouse winter ranges. This timing restriction applies to all drill hole locations.
2. Sharp-tailed Grouse & Sage Grouse lek and brood rearing activities: Exploration activities as described above shall not be conducted between March 1 and June 15 for the protection of lek, nesting and brood rearing activities for sage grouse and sharp-tailed grouse. This timing restriction applies to all drill hole locations.
3. Migratory Birds: Exploration activities as described above will not be conducted from April 15 to July 15 for the protection of nesting migratory birds.
4. Timing Drill Hole Reclamation: Reclamation and seeding of all the drill holes shall be performed and be completed within seven (7) calendar days after ceasing all

- drilling-related activities at each specific drill hole location.
5. Cultural Resources: The operator is responsible for the informing all persons in the area who are associated with this project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archeological materials are uncovered during construction, the operator is immediately to stop work that might further disturb such materials, and contact the authorized officer (AL). Within five working days, the AO will the operator as to:
- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
  - the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation); and
  - a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 35 CFR 800.11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

### **CONCLUSION**

☐ Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

Note: If one or more of the criteria are not met, a conclusion of conformance and/or NEPA adequacy cannot be made and this box cannot be checked

  
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Todd D. Yeager  
Field Manager  
Miles City Field Office

7/26/2013

Date



# Drill Hole Locations

Date 6/7/13



USDA, BLM and FS Personnel

- Drill\_Holes
- Townships
- Sections
- Aliquots

Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983 Albers  
Geographic Coordinate System: GCS North American 1983  
Datum: D North American 1983

1:24,000

0 0.04 0.08 0.16 0.24 0.32  
Miles



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
MILES CITY FIELD OFFICE

NOT TO SCALE  
Land ownership data is derived from the  
Bureau of Land Management's 1:250,000 scale  
map. Therefore, land ownership may not be  
shown for parcels smaller than 40 acres, and  
land ownership lines may have plotting errors  
due to source data.

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management  
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